

**BOOK
WEEK**

The Tormenting Story Of The U-2

THE U-2 AFFAIR. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House. \$4.95.

By Theodore H. White

In "The U-2 Affair," a truly remarkable performance in the reportorial art, Thomas B. Ross and David Wise have delivered us not only a thrilling story of espionage and adventure, but a study in American politics of major significance.

For here, detail by tormenting detail, these two extraordinary young reporters have traced the drama of America's aerial espionage from the orange-red flare that brought Francis Gary Powers down over Russia on the morning of May 1, 1960, to the ultimate moral perplexities of this age when techniques challenge conscience, and both challenge the supreme political responsibility of government.



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THE AUTHORS

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radio opportunity was elevated to high national policy with the construction by Lockheed Aircraft engineers of their special reconnaissance 2 for overflight of the Eurasian land mass. And, with the first success of U-2 flights in 1956, a program of espionage began that continued with such staggering success and result that, by 1960, American policy makers had all but lost any genuine control or political guidance of the instrument.

Much of this technical story is already well known, although never told in such detail as Ross and Wise have uncovered, nor with such vivid human vignettes of the time and place of such flights, the environment of scene and the description of the essentially simple human drama of Powers, who were the key of the operation.

THE BOOK begins with the reality of the postwar world—the fact that for years American policy makers had permitted, without serious debate, photographic missions by our planes over the borders of the Soviet Union, an American illegality balanced, in our conscience, by the persistent illegality of Communist espionage in the United States. By 1955, however, the practice of such flights of spottage

WHAT GIVES THE BOOK dimension, however, is the way the authors lift their story from the narrative of flight, chase, and hardware of espionage to the level of politics. Their chapter on the grotesque confusion in Washington in the first week of May, 1960, when our government waffled, fumbled, then humiliated itself in deceit, leads directly to the chaos of the weeks preceding the summit conference of that month; to the incredible implied threat of our leaders that we could continue overflights of the Soviet Union, thus dooming the conference in advance; to the jitteriness of the men who held the levers of government—the offer of Allen Dulles of CIA to resign his post, the panic 10-hour emergency alert called by Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates from Paris, the breakdown of communication among State, White House, CIA and NASA; to the final, brilliantly told story of the summit conference in Paris where Khrushchev, with peasant violence, pushed his good thing too far (all he wanted was his pound of public apology) and combined Russian stupidity with American stupidity to wreck the fairest hope in years of bringing peace near.

One is reminded constantly in reading this book of the

THE REVIEWER

Theodore H. White, journalist, editor and novelist, is one of the great reporters of his time. His five books have all been national best sellers. The most recent one, "The Making of the President 1960," is in its eighth printing and was recently awarded a Pulitzer Prize. White is currently engaged in adapting it as a television documentary series.



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